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May 19, 2005

The Honorable J. Kenneth Blackwell
Ohio Secretary of State
180 East Broad Street, 16th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Ms. Lisa Schwartze
Director, Board of Elections
Hocking County Courthouse
1 East Main Street
Logan, OH 43138

Dear Secretary Blackwell and Director Schwartze:

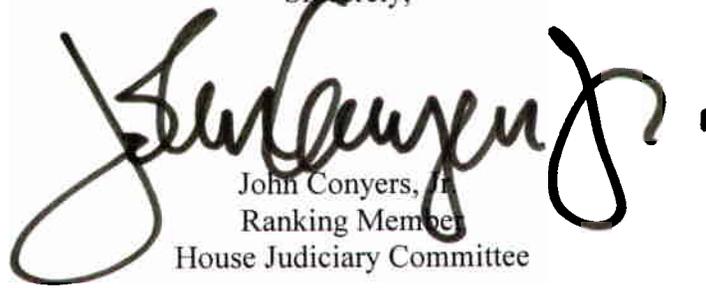
I was astounded to hear today that the Hocking County Board of Elections has fired Ms. Sherole Eaton, Deputy Director, a known whistleblower who exposed irregularities and/or misconduct in the Board's recount procedures. Last fall, Ms. Eaton bravely came forward to report that a representative of Triad, Inc. had behaved suspiciously, and appeared to tamper with computers and appeared to create "cheat sheets" for those who were supposed to be conducting independent hand recounts.

Absent any other explanation, and having been told at the time of the incident that Ms. Eaton was an excellent employee, I can only conclude that Ms. Eaton's firing was solely out of retaliation. In my view, Ms. Eaton should be rewarded, not punished for honestly and ethically fulfilling her duties. Ms. Eaton, as an election official, can only be fired for good cause under Ohio law.¹

¹OHIO REV. CODE. ANN. § 3501.16 (Anderson 2005). The Ohio Code clearly provides that election officials can only be relieved of their positions for good cause: "The secretary of state may summarily remove or suspend any member of a board of elections, or the director, deputy director, or any other employee of the board, for neglect of duty, malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office, for any willful violation of Title XXXV [35] of the Revised Code, or for any other good and sufficient cause."

I strongly urge you to reverse this decision and reinstate Ms. Eaton's employment with your office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Conyers, Jr.", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Judiciary Committee